



National Council of Resistance of Iran U.S. Representative Office

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UN Experts' Report on Iran 1988 Massacre Necessitates Independent Investigation, Accountability

WASHINGTON, DC, December 11, 2020 -- December 10 marks the internationally recognized Human Rights Day, a harbinger of an end to tyranny and oppression and a day to pay tribute to all defenders of human rights and dignity. This year, it also marks a new awakening of the world conscience to the past and present crimes against humanity committed by the religious dictatorship ruling Iran, most notably the 1988 massacre of thousands of political prisoners and the 2019 massacre of over 1,500 pro-democracy protesters.

On December 9, 2020, the text of a communication by seven United Nations experts referring to the 1988 massacre as a "crime against humanity" was published. The seven UN Special Rapporteurs called for an "in-depth" and "independent" investigation into this horrific crime.

The 18-page report states that "we are seriously concerned by the alleged continued refusal to disclose the fate and whereabouts of thousands of individuals who were reportedly forcibly disappeared and then extrajudicially executed in 1988. We are further alarmed by allegations of the authorities' refusal to provide families with accurate and complete death certificates, the destruction of mass graves, the ongoing threats and harassment of the families, the lack of investigation and prosecution for the killings and the statements from the Government denying or trivializing the cases and equating criticizing the killings as support for terrorism."

The UN experts stressed, should the Iranian regime "continue to refuse to uphold its obligations under international human rights law, we call on the international community to take action to investigate the cases including through the establishment of an international investigation."

Mrs. Maryam Rajavi, the President-elect of the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI), said: "The communication by UN official experts on the massacre of political prisoners in Iran as a crime against humanity, which calls for a thorough and independent investigation into all cases, represents a culmination of the roaring blood of martyrs who adhered to their principles, and is a major step forward in the Call for Justice Movement after 32 years."

Mrs. Rajavi added, "The UN official report emphasizes that the Iranian regime has refused to uphold its obligations under international human rights law. This underscores the need to refer the dossier of this ongoing crime against humanity to the UN Security Council, and to prosecute the perpetrators and masterminds of one of the great crimes of this century."

She added that the current rulers of Iran, “Particularly [the regime’s Supreme Leader] Ali Khamenei, [the regime’s President] Hassan Rouhani, [the regime’s Judiciary Chief] Ebrahim Raisi, and many of the ministers and directors of the regime’s Judiciary, Intelligence Ministry and IRGC were involved in the massacre of political prisoners in 1988 and throughout the 1980s. They must face justice for committing crimes against humanity.”

Amnesty International described the UN experts’ report as “a momentous breakthrough” which “marks a turning point in the long-standing struggles of victims’ families and survivors, supported by Iranian human rights organizations and Amnesty International, to end these crimes and obtain truth, justice and reparation.” Amnesty International added, “Top UN human rights experts have now sent an unequivocal, and long overdue, message: the ongoing crimes of mass enforced disappearances resulting from the secret extrajudicial executions of 1988 can no longer go unaddressed and unpunished.”

In a book titled *Iran: Where Mass Murderer Rule, The 1988 Massacre of 30,000 Political Prisoners and the Continuing Atrocities*, NCRI-US documented the details of the massacre and the perpetrators of the atrocity

Last July, State Department spokeswoman Morgan Ortagus said, “July 19th marks the anniversary of the start of Iran’s so-called death commissions on the orders of Ayatollah Khomeini. These commissions reportedly forcibly disappeared and extrajudicially executed thousands of political dissident prisoners.”

All Iranian officials “who commit human rights violations or abuses should be held accountable. The United States calls on the international community to conduct independent investigations and to provide accountability and justice for the victims of these horrendous violations of human rights, organized by the Iranian regime,” she said in a video message on July 17, 2020.

On December 10, 2020, Assistant Secretary of State Robert A. Destro said, “The United States echoes the UN’s call for an independent investigation into mass disappearances and summary executions in Iran in 1988.” He added, “The regime has failed to provide families an accounting of the fate of their loved ones. Instead, they threaten families and desecrate grave sites. Iranians deserve justice. We urge the international community to hold the regime accountable to the UN’s demands.”

The fascist theocracy has an existential need to kill, torture, and terrorize its citizens to stay in power. Beyond its borders, it thrives on terrorism, fomenting mayhem, and assassination of dissidents. Since 2018, seven of the Iranian regime’s diplomats have been expelled by European nations for their involvement in terrorism. Another, Assadollah Assadi, was just on trial in Belgium for bringing a powerful bomb from Iran and delivering it to his accomplices to detonate at a huge 2018 Free Iran gathering of some 100,000 people in Paris. The regime’s Foreign Ministry, instead of engaging in diplomacy, is engaged in terrorism, hostage taking, and blackmail to secure the interests of Iran’s rulers.

Regrettably, the long-held policy of western capitals to turn a blind eye to Tehran’s systemic and egregious violations of human rights and terrorism has emboldened the regime by giving it a sense of impunity. Now, the international community has this

opportunity to hold Tehran accountable for its past and ongoing crimes against its citizens. It must not allow the regime to hold human beings as hostages and repeatedly swap them with its terrorists to evade accountability.

It is vital that the international community send a clear message to the mullahs ruling Iran that the era of impunity is over. Launching a formal investigation into the 1988 massacre would be an important first step which should lead to charges against current Iranian officials at the International Criminal Court.

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Briefing to Present Evidence of Iranian Foreign Ministry's Role in Paris Bombing Plot

WASHINGTON, DC, February 1, 2021 – On Thursday, February 4, 2021, at 10:30 am EST, the U.S. Representative Office of the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI-US) will host a virtual briefing to address the policy implications of the verdict by a Belgian court in the trial of a senior Iranian regime's diplomat on charges of plotting to bomb a 2018 opposition rally in Paris. The briefing will take place just hours after the court announces its judgement.

The briefing will present extensive evidence, gathered in a two-and-a-half-year multi-national official investigation, which proves Iran's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its embassy in Austria, in collaboration with the Ministry of Intelligence and Security, executed the terror plot.

Since 1984, the United States has classified Iran's regime as the world's leading state-sponsor of terrorism. All of Tehran's major terrorist operations in western nations have been facilitated by its diplomatic corps. However, this is the first time that a diplomat has been tried on terrorism charges. Several agents working with Tehran's embassy were also on trial.

Speakers:

Hon. Tom Ridge, former Secretary of Homeland Security and Governor of Pennsylvania.

Senator Robert G. Torricelli, former Democratic Senator from New Jersey.

Ambassador Robert Joseph, former Undersecretary of State for Arms Control and International Security; former Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Proliferation Strategy, Counterproliferation and Homeland Defense.

Ambassador Lincoln P. Bloomfield, Jr., Distinguished Fellow and Chairman Emeritus at the Stimson Center, former Assistant Secretary of State for Political-Military Affairs.

Ambassador Marc Ginsberg, former Ambassador to Morocco, former White House Middle East advisor for President Carter.

Farzin Hashemi, Foreign Affairs Committee, National Council of Resistance of Iran.

Briefing will be moderated by Alireza Jafarzadeh, Deputy Director of the NCRI-US.

Date & Time: Thursday, February 4, 2021; 10:30 am EST

For media inquiries, please contact: media@ncrius.org

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE



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Distinguished Policy Veterans Examine Implications of Iran Diplomat's Terrorism Conviction, Urge a Firm Iran Policy

WASHINGTON, DC, February 7, 2021 -- On Thursday, February 4, 2021, the U.S. Representative Office of the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI-US) hosted a virtual briefing to address the policy implications of the verdict by a Belgian court, sentencing Iranian diplomat-terrorist Assadollah Assadi to 20 years for plotting to bomb a 2018 opposition rally in Paris.

The experts speaking in the NCRI briefing reviewed the extensive evidence, gathered in a two-and-a-half-year multi-national official investigation, confirming the direct role of Iran's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its embassy in Austria, in collaboration with the Ministry of Intelligence and Security, in planning, providing the explosives, and executing the terror plot. They discussed the policy implications of the first ever trial and conviction of a diplomat for committing an act of terrorism, although the thwarted bombing was not by far the first incidence of Iranian diplomatic resources being used for terrorism. Since 1984, the United States has classified Iran's regime as the world's leading state-sponsor of terrorism. All of Tehran's major terrorist operations in western nations have been facilitated by its diplomatic corps.

The discussion was opened by NCRI Foreign Affairs member Farzin Hashemi, live from Antwerp, who pronounced the court's judgement "historic," describing the intense pressure, and even threats of terrorist retaliation Tehran had applied to relevant governments across Europe to prevent the trial and consequent exposure of irrefutable evidence that "the entirety of the regime was involved. Based on our own information, the decision had been made at the Supreme Security Council headed by Hassan Rouhani and approved by Khamenei, and then it was assigned to the Minister of Intelligence in close cooperation with the Minister of Foreign Affairs to conduct the operation."

Mr. Hashemi cited numerous statements by the presiding judge, confirming that "it was state terrorism" and that the terrorists "used diplomatic privilege as a facilitator for their operation." He also underscored that at issue was not "terrorism that occurred in the past, but an operation which is still ongoing because that terrorist network, that terrorist apparatus, is still there, is still operating." Mr. Hashemi concluded by calling on "European governments, as well as the United States, to take the appropriate position, take the appropriate measures, in order to confront the regime's malign behavior, whether in the field of terrorism or the human rights violations in Iran."

The Honorable Tom Ridge, former Secretary of Homeland Security and Governor of Pennsylvania, reiterated the panel's commendation of "the people of Belgium, their judicial

system, their security service, for their courage, for their thoroughness in this investigation... it was a state-sponsored terrorist act. And that reprehensible act isn't the first, but there's a series of acts over the past 30 or 40 years... We know that this is just the most recent terrorist event. But they've exported terrorism throughout Europe on multiple occasions. We know they've spent hundreds of millions of dollars, perhaps in excess of billions of dollars in the Middle East supporting Hamas and Hezbollah in order to keep that cauldron boiling with the anxiety and unrest. We know they have supported proxies in Bahrain, in Yemen, in Syria, in Lebanon, in Iraq. We know that internally they have killed 30 or 40 thousand men and women who disagreed with the policy, the internal policies, the repressive policies of the Iranian government. We know they have imprisoned and tortured literally thousands and thousands of more individuals."

Secretary Ridge emphasized that "the most powerful and meaningful" way European nations and the U.S. can repudiate the terrorism of the Tehran regime is to "align themselves ... with the hopes and aspirations of the Iranian people... simply recognize the NCRI as the embodiment of the hopes and aspirations of the Iranian people for freedom."

Senator Robert G. Torricelli, former Democratic Senator from New Jersey, noted that like the other panelists, he was a participant in "that rally that day in June of 2018. But so was the former Prime Minister of Canada, cabinet ministers of Britain, Germany, France, Italy, United States. The former foreign minister of France. Members of Parliament from almost every member of the European community and the United States Congress. Members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and high military officers of the United States Army. What if the bomb had exploded? the target may have been to assassinate Mrs. Rajavi, to murder her. But almost certainly many of the people I've just identified would have been killed as well."

In light of the egregious carnage that would certainly have occurred, and the Belgian court's conclusion that the attack had been conducted by the ruling regime in Tehran, "to maintain diplomatic relationships, to allow the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in fact to allow [Foreign Minister Javad] Zarif himself to enter Europe, to engage in negotiations, in the face of what might have been is to ignore reality, Mr. Torricelli warned. "A lot of people have a lot of decisions to make after today's verdict. ... if the intention of the Biden administration is to reengage with Iran on the nuclear accords, there's some serious thinking to do here. Who's going to be at that table? Zarif? His agents? ... The very people who made the decisions to send this weapon to Europe to kill us?"

Former Undersecretary of State for Arms Control and International Security, Ambassador Robert Joseph, also noted that "This act of state terrorism should have a sobering effect. It should end any move to resurrect the appeasement policies of the past and dispel any false nostalgia about working with Foreign Minister Zarif as a moderate influence within the regime..."

"It's now time for the government to act decisively, knowing that further concessions to the regime will only bring more injustice to the Iranian people and more criminal and terrorist acts. For the EU, this should mean the adoption of a firm policy, including the designation of the MOIS and IRGC as terrorist entities, as Mrs. Rajavi has stated, withdrawing the legal status of all of the regime's agents in Europe, and dramatically reducing the level of diplomatic relations until the regime has demonstrated its commitment to forgo terrorist activities."

Ambassador Lincoln P. Bloomfield, Jr., former Assistant Secretary of State for Political-Military Affairs, began by emphasizing that “At some point, the United States has to realize that it has tried very hard to make gesture after gesture to Iran... for 41 years, this regime has always acted in bad faith. They’re still attacking us through proxies around the world. They’re undermining UN mediation efforts in Yemen and Syria. They’re funding terror against Israel. And now, once again, they’re aiming the nuclear gun at the rest of the world.”

What can the US do? Asked, Ambassador Bloomfield. “I have three suggestions. Number one, we can, and we should launch a comprehensive counterintelligence investigation in the United States aimed at Iranian agents of influence. If you were following the news in January, an academic Iranian exile was arrested in Boston. He’s published op-eds in the New York Times, but for 14 years he’s been on the payroll of the Iran regime, undeclared. Do you really think he’s the only one in the United States? We need to do that, and I’ve been calling for that for years.”

Mr. Bloomfield’s second suggestion was for the US, Europe, Canada, and others “to join together to conduct a comprehensive human rights investigation of major crimes tied to leading regime figures. The 1988 massacre of 30,000 political prisoners—we now have evidence, we have proof, we have witnesses, all of this is now available, and the UN is starting to take note. We should press for justice on this.” He mentioned the Argentina bombings in the 1990s, the bombings of the US embassy and the embassy annex and the US Marine barracks in the early 1980s, and asked, “Does anyone think that the Iran regime has less blood on its hands than the leaders of the former Yugoslavia who sit in jail at the Hague, convicted by the International Court of Justice? We’ve got to start working now collectively with other like-minded nations, starting in Europe, to prepare those dossiers. This has no connection to nuclear talks.”

“And third, we need, as my fellow panelists have said, a comprehensive strategy to end 41 years of terrorism,” he said. “Foreign Minister Zarif is completely discredited and there has to be consequences. We need a new strategy. We need a broad new conversation on Iran.”

Ambassador Marc Ginsberg, former Ambassador to Morocco and former White House Middle East advisor for President Carter, reviewed the many attempts by consecutive administrations, Democrat and Republican, to encourage “moderates” within the regime, including the Nuclear Deal. To no avail. “The JCPOA provided more time to the Iranian regime to be able to find ways to violate sanctions, to gain more currency—I’m talking about hard currency and diplomatic currency—to engage in more terrorism, to increase its ability to harm our allies abroad, to plot more terrorist attacks in the United States, as well as to in effect begin and continue to plan its own Iran nuclear weapons program under the very eyes of inspectors... Iran has once again proven that it is not going to be in any way, shape or form undermined in its mission to promote and export terrorism and to continue its nuclear weapons program.”

Addressing the Biden administration, Ambassador Ginsberg said “this decision by the Belgian court should be a watershed moment here in the United States, particularly at this time,” and called for relevant officials “to hear from all voices” proposing how to best approach Iran. “We have a responsibility to take all of these recommendations and most importantly to ensure that Congress, as well as our allies, as well as those within the Biden

administration that are very skeptical about reentry to a JCPOA on our prior terms, to ensure that they have all the ammunition and all the evidence they need.”

The panel discussion concluded with remarks by Alireza Jafarzadeh, deputy director of the NCRI-US, who summed up the position of the Iranian resistance as stated by Mrs. Maryam Rajavi.

1. This is a historic ruling against the entirety of the regime and its state-sponsored terrorism.
2. All the regime’s embassies in Europe need to be shut down.
3. It is time to hold Foreign Minister Javad Zarif to account; the Foreign Ministry he heads has been consistently involved in terrorism.
4. The regime’s leaders also need to be held to account, and to face justice.
5. Agents of the Iranian regime in western nations must be identified, prosecuted, and expelled. They should not be granted either refugee privileges or citizenship.
6. Any negotiations with the Iranian regime and the return to normal diplomatic status must be conditional on dismantling the mullahs’ terrorist network and ending the human rights violations in Iran.

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NCRI-US Welcomes Bipartisan House Resolution Condemning Tehran's Terrorism and Rights Abuses, Supporting Iran Uprising

*Introduced a week after 20 year terror conviction of Iran regime diplomat,
H.Res118 notes "support for Mrs. Maryam Rajavi's 10-point plan for the
future of Iran."*

WASHINGTON, DC, February 12, 2021 -- The US Representative Office of the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI-US) welcomes the bipartisan U.S. House resolution, H.Res.118, "Expressing support for the Iranian people's desire for a democratic, secular, and nonnuclear Republic of Iran and condemning violations of human rights and state-sponsored terrorism by the Iranian Government," introduced by Congressmen Tom McClintock (R-CA) and Brad Sherman (D-CA). With 113 original sponsor and cosponsors from both sides of the aisle, the resolution was brought to the administration's attention in a letter to President Biden, as it crafts its policy on Iran.

"This bi-partisan resolution comes at a very momentous juncture for the Iranian people's movement for democracy and freedom. The ruling religious dictatorship is steadily weakening under the pressing weight of popular discontent, political infighting, systemic corruption, and international isolation," said Soona Samsami, the U.S. Representative of the NCRI.

The Congressional initiative also comes just days after a Belgian court sentenced a senior Iranian diplomat, Assadollah Assadi, to 20 years in jail for masterminding a state-sanctioned plot to bomb the Iranian Resistance's 2018 Free Iran summit near Paris. The gathering of 100,000 included several hundred current and former American and European dignitaries. Assadi's "3 accomplices were given jail terms of 15 to 18 years and stripped of their Belgian citizenship," the resolution highlighted.

"On June 30, 2018, tens of thousands of people gathered in Paris at the Free Iran gathering where they supported advocates for a democratic, secular, and non-nuclear Republic of Iran, and showed support for the opposition leader Mrs. Maryam Rajavi's 10-point plan for the future of Iran, which calls for the universal right to vote, free elections, and a market economy, and advocates gender, religious, and ethnic equality, a foreign policy based on peaceful coexistence, and a nonnuclear Iran," the resolution said. "Assadi took an Iranian-made bomb from Iran to Europe on a commercial flight, and delivered it to his accomplices with the aim of causing mass casualties at the Free Iran gathering in Paris in 2018," the resolution notes.

The bipartisan initiative explains that the Belgian court found "that the four defendants are part of a larger terrorist group within a specific Iranian intelligence service. This appears from by the sums of money paid to the defendants, the way information was gathered, the meetings in Iran, the use of diplomatic status, and the making and testing of the explosive device in Iran itself."

Referring to the foiled 2018 terrorist truck bombing plot targeting the Iranian Resistance in Albania, also conspired by an Iranian embassy, the resolution recalls that “in December 2018, the Government of Albania expelled Iran’s Ambassador, Gholamhossein Mohammadnia, and MOIS station chief in Albania, Mostafa Roudaki, for planning terrorist activities against Iranian dissidents and members of the People’s Mojahedin Organization of Iran (PMOI/MEK). In January 2020, the Government of Albania expelled two other Iranian diplomats also for planning terrorist activities against the MEK.”

The People’s Mojahedin Organization of Iran (PMOI), also referred to as the Mujahedin-e Khalq (MEK), is Iran’s largest, most organized opposition group and principal member of the democratic coalition, the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI). Having led the opposition to the mullahs since 1979, the MEK has been systemically targeted by the regime’s repression and terrorism apparatus.

Regarding two agents of Tehran’s intelligence ministry who were arrested by the United States government in August 2018, the resolution states that these two “had acted on behalf of the MOIS [Ministry of Intelligence and Security] to conduct covert surveillance in the United States against officials of the National Council of Resistance of Iran for a target package, which, according to the Department of Justice Federal complaint, may include ‘apprehension, recruitment, cyber exploitation, or capture/ kill operations’, and that they pleaded guilty and were sentenced to imprisonment.”

H.Res.118 “condemns past and present Iranian state-sponsored terrorist attacks against United States citizens and officials, as well as Iranian dissidents, including the Iranian regime’s terror plot against the ‘Free Iran 2018—the Alternative’ gathering in Paris.”

The bipartisan group of over 100 members “Stands with the people of Iran who are continuing to hold legitimate and peaceful protests against an oppressive and corrupt regime; and recognizes the rights of the Iranian people and their struggle to establish a democratic, secular, and nonnuclear Republic of Iran.”

The NCRI-US supports the resolution’s transatlantic call “on nations to prevent the malign activities of the Iranian regime’s diplomatic missions, with the goal of closing them down, including the Iranian Embassy in Albania.”

The NCRI-US also welcomes the resolution’s core premise that any effective and meaningful Iran policy, aiming to enjoy bi-partisan support from the U.S. Congress, should be based on recognition of the right of the Iranian people to liberty and their struggle to achieve a democratic, secular, and non-nuclear republic in Iran, a goal for which the NCRI has endeavored for four decades.

The National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI) is a democratic opposition coalition founded in 1981 in Tehran, as an alternative to the clerical regime. It will serve as a provisional government led by its President-elect Maryam Rajavi and based on her Ten Point Plan, once the theocracy is ousted. Its primary responsibility will then be to hold free and fair elections for a national and constituent assembly within six months after the fall of the regime, and to ensure the peaceful transition of power to the elected representatives of the Iranian people.

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Policy Experts to Assess Prospects for Change in Iran

WASHINGTON, DC, March 19, 2021 – As the ancient Iranian New Year, Nowruz, is celebrated, the U.S. Representative Office of the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI-US) will hold an online conference on Wednesday, March 24, 2021, to discuss Iran's internal situation, prospects for fundamental change, and the Tehran regime's regional and international behavior.

Distinguished policy and national security figures will join to consider a framework for an Iran policy effective in neutralizing Tehran's malign conduct and supportive of the Iranian people's aspirations for freedom and democracy.

SPEAKERS

- **Senator Robert G. Torricelli**, former Democratic Senator from New Jersey
- **Hon. Tom Ridge**, former Secretary of Homeland Security and Governor of Pennsylvania.
- **General (ret.) Charles "Chuck" F. Wald**, former Deputy Commander of United States European Command
- **Amb. Mitchell Reiss**, former director of Policy Planning, U.S. Department of State
- **Prof. Matthew Kroenig**, director of the Global Strategy Initiative at The Atlantic Council
- **Amb. Robert G. Joseph**, former Undersecretary of State for Arms Control and International Security
- **Dr. Steven Bucci**, visiting fellow at The Heritage Foundation and a former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense
- **Amb. Lincoln P. Bloomfield, Jr.**, former Assistant Secretary of State for Political-Military Affairs
- **Prof. Ivan Sascha Sheehan**, executive director of the School of Public and International Affairs at the University of Baltimore
- **Amb. Marc Ginsberg**, former Ambassador to Morocco and former White House Middle East advisor for President Carter
- **John Sano**, former Deputy Director, National Clandestine Service
- **Bruce McColm**, president, Global Initiative for Democracy; former Executive Director of Freedom House
- **Soona Samsami**, U.S. Representative, National Council of Resistance of Iran

Briefing will be moderated by Alireza Jafarzadeh, Deputy Director of the NCRI-US

WHEN: Wednesday, March 24, 2021; 11:00 AM EST

To RSVP and for media inquiries, contact: media@ncrius.org

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Policy Experts Underscore Prospects for Change in Iran, Regime's Utter Weakness

NCRI-US Nowruz Conference Emphasizes Iranians' Aspirations for Freedom and Democracy

WASHINGTON, DC, March 26, 2021 -- On March 24, 2021, as the ancient Iranian New Year, Nowruz, was celebrated in Iran and around the world, the U.S. Representative Office of the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI-US) held an online conference to examine Iran's internal situation, prospects for fundamental change, and the Tehran regime's regional and international behavior. Distinguished policy and national security figures contributed to the virtual discussion of a framework for an effective Iran policy.

Soona Samsami, NCRI Representative in the U.S. provided a clearer picture of the domestic situation in Iran. "From all indications," she said, "domestically and internationally, it appears that the Iranian year 1,400 will be different from all the previous years, and will be the harbinger of the dawn of a New Year in Iran, when freedom will dawn on our fettered homeland."

Ms. Samsami explained that "With repression failing to stem the tide of uprisings and protests, the mullahs had pinned their hopes and prayers on the 2020 U.S. elections. But in the two months since the new U.S. President has taken office, it has become clear that a return to the previous balance of power is impossible."

She concluded by emphasizing that "The regime is now at its weakest point. The circumstances for a revolution are in place in Iran, and the social readiness for overthrowing the regime is beyond the shadow of a doubt. The position of the Iranian regime in 2021 is totally weaker than in 2015, but it wants to paint a completely different picture by threatening others." Seeking to gain concessions, she added, "the regime has tried to test the US government's resolve by stepping up rocket attacks in the countries in the region, and by further violating its nuclear commitments over the past few months."

The NCRI's US Representative warned that "Any concessions to this regime or silence towards its crimes, will only embolden it to increase its threats more than ever before. The only option for the United States and the international community is to show maximum resolve against this regime and to stand on the side of the Iranian people as they strive to bring down the regime and establish a democratic, secular and non-nuclear republic in Iran."

Ms. Samsami was followed by Senator Robert G. Torricelli, former Democratic Senator from New Jersey, who said, "Let me begin both by a statement of admiration and frankly, some of relief with the comments of Secretary of State Blinken, who has made clear ... that there will be no change, no reconciliation, no unilateral concessions until the Iranian [regime] acts."

He recalled "The thousands of people who have taken to the streets, the protests, the slogans, those who will put their lives at risk -- indeed, 1500 souls have lost their lives in this new, perhaps last chapter in the fight for Iranian freedom. So, on this Nowruz, we remember them, those who were lost in the last year, and we mark their courage as a new year starts, those who have taken a stand to salvage and change their country."

Senator Torricelli summed up the international and domestic political landscape by saying, "The genie cannot be put back in the bottle... The only answer for the regime in Tehran is that it comes to an end, and the people of Iran reclaim their country and get the kind of free and prosperous and secure future shared by people around the globe."

His advice to U.S. policy makers: "For our part, as Americans, our role is simple: Stay the course, keep to our principles, allow the Iranian people the space and the time to reclaim their country."

The U.S.'s first Secretary of Homeland Security, Governor Tom Ridge, focused on the achievements of the NCRI and Iranian Resistance, saying "I think it's important to note that as you held your ground against tyranny, terrorism, and oppression, you began to attract more and more supporters from around the globe, as evidenced by the number of countries that are represented historically on our annual event that we've been holding in Paris for long over a decade."

The creation of Ashraf 3 had convinced the Governor that the NCRI and MEK "are more determined than ever to bring about a democratic, non-nuclear, free and secular Iran." He emphasized that the movement's "spirit and resolve has remained untarnished" and "relentless in your pursuit in your daily lives, your historic resistance and in your decades long sacrifice."

Governor Ridge underscored that he is "quite confident that your leader, Madam Rajavi, is indeed a great inspiration to young Iranians from around the world who support your cause, who understand and appreciate the sacrifice you've made on their behalf."

Amb. Marc Ginsberg, former Ambassador to Morocco and former White House Middle East advisor for President Carter began his remarks with a review of "the struggle for democracy, the struggle for freedom that has brought the Iranian people to the streets and at times they have sacrificed their lives." He spoke of their determination to change the regime, which he said reflected their "utter contempt for the widespread financial corruption, the cronyism and nepotism that have to be viewed as key contributing factors to the enormous number of protests that had taken place during the period widely known as 'bloody November' [of 2019] ... These protests essentially led so many Iranians to ask themselves, are we living in a regime that is no different than the corrupt regimes of the past? The financial corruption at the top of the Ayatollah's regime and across almost every segment of his regime cries out for an overturning of the regime and an end to the corruption."

Ambassador Ginsberg was optimistic that "this is indeed the potential year for the coming of the light, a light that shines brightly on democratic freedoms and on the efforts of all of us who aspire for Iran, a better day of freedom, hope, and liberty."

The next speaker, Amb. Robert G. Joseph, former Undersecretary of State for Arms Control and International Security, outlined what he felt are three key issues. First, appeasement "in any and every form has failed to achieve U.S. objectives." Secondly, Tehran "will never

give up its quest for nuclear weapons. It may make some tactical maneuvers, as it did with the JCPOA, but it will continue to advance its capability to have a nuclear weapon at the time of its choosing." Third, "abandoning the principled policy of promoting human rights – as was done in 2009 -- only encourages more gross violations.

Ambassador Joseph concluded that the means to success in achieving U.S. goals is through regime change, "not through military invasion – but by supporting the democratic opposition." He said the regime "has lost all legitimacy with its own people. It is an evil regime that has committed documented crimes against humanity. It is a brittle regime that should and will be overthrown by the Iranian people." The U.S., he said, "at a minimum...must not stand in their way. We must not feed the beast. We must support the people of Iran – not their dictators."

Ambassador Mitchell Reiss, former director of Policy Planning at the State Department, agreed with Amb. Joseph, saying he also sees "a government that has lost all legitimacy in the eyes of its own people. I see a government that is grossly incompetent in running Iran."

Amb. Reiss was confident that "President Biden and his senior officials have all recognized the shortcomings of the 2015 nuclear agreement. They have admitted that the agreement did not address the ballistic missile program that Iran continues to develop. They have admitted that the agreement did not halt Iran's ongoing interference in the region, where it has tried to destabilize neighboring governments. They have admitted that the agreement did nothing to halt the massive human rights violations that the mullahs and IRGC inflict every day on the Iranian people."

He noted that support for human rights is "quickly becoming a theme of the Biden Administration's overall approach to foreign policy," which is "not good news for the mullahs and IRGC."

John Sano, former Deputy Director of the National Clandestine Service, addressed the Iran regime's use of terrorism domestically and as foreign policy. He advised the panel that "one only has to look at the most recent instances of persecution and terror that Iran's terrorist organization, the Ministry of Intelligence and Security [MOIS] has perpetrated upon its own people, as well as those of other nations." He referred to the first ever trial and conviction of "a senior Iran diplomat, Assadollah Assadi on charges of terrorism and having been sentenced to 20 years in prison, along with three of his accomplices."

"That's just one indication of the length Tehran will go to," Mr. Sano noted, "in order to maintain their fragile control over their own people through murder, kidnapping, and torture."

Mr. Sano concluded with the observation that "The efforts of Madam Rajavi and of the entire MEK organization are not just a beacon of hope for positive change, but an international example of how Iran could be, what the future should be as an active participant in the international community, a force for freedom in a turbulent region and for a true democracy and for equal representation."

His remarks were followed by those of Steven Bucci, visiting fellow at The Heritage Foundation and a former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, who stressed the need to "recognize and label the government of the mullahs as the largest state sponsor of terror in the world, the most prevalent sponsor of that, and go after them for it."

From another angle, Mr. Bucci said "We also need to label them and pursue them as oppressors of the Iranian people. We have let them get away with running roughshod over their own population, and basically giving them a pass."

The best approach, according to the policy expert, is to "come together with the Iranian people against this government, and "forget the idea that the mullahs are ever going to be a partner for us in the Middle East in any meaningful or positive way until that government changes."

General Charles "Chuck" F. Wald (USAF, Ret.), former Deputy Commander of United States European Command began by emphasizing that "Iran continues to be a malicious enemy of the United States in the Middle East... They continue to promote terrorism."

General Wald warned that the IRGC must "stop building and testing ballistic missiles that could reach not just the Middle East, but Europe and potentially the United States, at some point. They need to stop sponsoring the attack of Western military personnel."

Drawing on his experience as a military-political analyst, General Wald warned the U.S. must not be "blind to the fact that the Iranian government... almost always, doesn't negotiate with goodwill." He concluded by commending the NCRI for "all you' are doing for your people, for the people of Iran that love freedom and want to be part of the world."

Amb. Lincoln P. Bloomfield, Jr., former Assistant Secretary of State for Political-Military Affairs welcomed the New Persian Year Every year by expressing "hope for better times, for freedom in Iran, for a better outcome for the Iranian people and for a happy ending to the long struggle for freedom. This year," he said, "we have hope, but we also see evidence that things are moving in the right direction."

Ambassador Bloomfield derided the regime's record as "the worst violator of terrorism, of suppression of human rights -- murdering its dissidents and jailing brave defenders of democracy." The mullahs' regime, he said, is "a corrupt regime, which has engaged in trafficking in drugs, in persons, in children, and, in so many ways, undermining the hopes for a rules-based international order. The jails of Iran are filled with the Alexei Navalnys, and the unmarked graves are filled with brave dissidents who just dared to speak their own mind about the future of their country."

Prof. Ivan Sascha Sheehan, Executive Director of the School of Public and International Affairs, University of Baltimore agreed that "Iran's human rights record should be the principal focus of U.S. policy in the year ahead," particularly "when it comes to holding regime officials accountable for crackdowns on protestors for engaging in demonstrations against the ruling theocracy."

"U.S. officials," he said, would be "wise to maintain and expand the assertive policies aimed at exploiting Iran's increasingly apparent vulnerabilities and seeking to further curtail the regime's nefarious activities."

Professor Sheehan concluded his remarks with a brief overview of steps he believes essential to a successful Iran policy. U.S. officials, he said, must "prioritize the Iranian people, not only their leaders; emphasize human rights; enforce the sanctions imposed on the Iranian regime; and support Iran's pro-democracy activists and bypass the Iran lobby." If this approach is adopted, then "U.S. security interests will be served, the aspirations of

the Iranian people will be upheld, and Iran can once again become a cradle of freedom in the Middle East.”

Addressing the Biden Administration, Professor Matthew Kroenig, director of the Global Strategy Initiative at The Atlantic Council noted that the “primary autocratic challenge in the Middle East” comes “from the mullahs and Tehran, against U.S. and allied interests.”

“Democracy is really the best machine ever invented for generating wealth and prosperity and freedom and happiness for people, Professor Kroenig declared, “and it’s a shame that the people of Iran have been denied the blessings of democracy over the past several decades. But I hope that in the future, democracy will come to Iran.”

The discussion concluded with remarks by Bruce McCollm, President, Global Initiative for Democracy, former Executive Director of Freedom House. As the New Year dawned, Mr. McCollm urged the panel to “look back in the last year. Under the leadership of Mrs. Rajavi, the NCRI has grown considerably and deepened its relationships around the world. I see this in the new faces, in the various seminars and press conferences that you have been holding... We’re seeing over the world that the international community has basically gotten fed up with the Iranian regime... In fact the NCRI has become the dominant figure in the issue of Iran... The regime continues to be very dangerous and that it’s dangerous from intense weakness.”

Thanking everyone for their participation, NCRI-US Deputy Director Alireza Jafarzadeh concluded the event by saying, “Even the regime’s Supreme Leader Khamenei had to acknowledge that 2021 is not 2015. The developments over the past few months further show that whatever happens in the future, the outcome awaiting the regime will be an outburst of uprisings. Indeed, with or without the JCPOA, with or without the sanctions, the Iranian regime is too weak, too corrupt, too repressive, and too paranoid to escape the outbreak of uprisings and its overthrow.”

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The decision by the European Union to designate eight commanders of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) and the Iranian regime's suppressive forces, as well as three notorious prisons is long overdue, yet welcome. However, the designation should be extended to Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, the regime's President, Hassan Rouhani, and Chief Justice Ebrahim Raisi.

The EU decision once again highlights the prudence of including the Iranian regime's halt to human rights violations as a central condition of any future agreement with that regime.

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* Alireza Jafarzadeh first revealed the existence of the nuclear sites in Natanz and Arak in August 2002, which triggered the IAEA inspections of Iranian nuclear sites. He was the target of a terror plot by the MOIS whose members were arrested in August 2018 and sentenced in 2019.



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PRESS RELEASE

April 14, 2021

The following should be attributed to Alireza Jafarzadeh, deputy director of the Washington office of the National Council of Resistance of Iran.*

The Iranian regime's announcement that it will start enriching uranium to 60% is actually further proof that Tehran should have never been allowed any enrichment at all. It also confirms that its entire nuclear weapons program should have been dismantled back in 2015. It must be dismantled NOW.

The Iranian regime has been stepping up its nuclear defiance in many ways to produce an artificial sense of urgency. It aims to create this false perception that it is close to building the bomb so that the United States and others would rush to make concessions and lift the sanctions.

The reality is that the announcement for 60% enrichment is indeed a sign of desperation of a very vulnerable regime, weakened by systematic corruption and widespread public discontent at home and isolation abroad.

Tehran is following its same old playbook, nuclear blackmail, expansion of terrorism, and repression at home. We should remember that deception, duplicity and nuclear blackmail are part of the Iranian regime's DNA.

Now is the time to stand firm against this desperate regime and not give in to its arrogance and demands.

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